

Capital Punishment

By Evangelist Dea Warford

I'm amazed at how many Christians don't believe in the death penalty. They argue that the death penalty was under the Mosaic law and since we are no longer under the "eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth" regulation of Old Testament Law, we should no longer use the death penalty. Let's get this settled once and for all: the death penalty was initiated by God himself, centuries before the law was ever given! "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God created He man" (Gen. 9:6). Capital punishment is not "cruel and unusual punishment". It is our loving Father's idea! Why? Because man is "created in the image of God".

Each person on earth is singularly created by God with high destiny on earth and a purpose that extends even into eternity. We are like God in that we are eternal beings and are born with pro-creativity-that awe-inspiring privilege of bringing other lives into this world as well as individually creative talents which allow each of us to leave our personal contribution to and to stamp our unique imprint forever upon our planet. No one has the right, nor can he be allowed with impunity, to premeditatedly eradicate anybody's life-long opportunity of such immense potential. If he does, God himself and this nation for over two centuries have deemed death as the entirely appropriate penalty and the only penalty that demonstrates adequately the infinite worth of an individual and the evil magnitude of the taking of a life.

Never mind if virtually every other first-world nation has outlawed the death penalty. We are not like other countries! The United States has always stood alone in modern history as a nation founded upon moral and Biblical principals. One man, one woman or one child is of such eternal value to both God and to our American society, that we both agree that capital punishment best expresses this truth and must remain a viable penalty for capital crimes. It's argued that the death penalty is not a deterrent to murder. Oh yes it is! Whoever is executed will never kill again!

Why not ask the opinion of the Oklahoman prisoners who commandeered a van transporting them in Texas. As they prepared to escape, one of them suggested they had better kill the guards before fleeing. But, one of them reminded them, "This is Texas!", and they agreed they had better not kill them! Texas is a death penalty state and reputed for being tough on crime. Severe penalties are a deterrent to crime! If not, why do criminals fight in courts to the 12th hour to stay their execution? Capital punishment would be far more effective if we'd halt the decades long appeals process! The Arab's method of summary execution is arguably merciless and barbarian, but does get its message across!

Perhaps the strongest argument against the death penalty is that from time to time an innocent man is put to death for a crime he didn't commit. This is true. But, America is at war: against crime. In any war there is always "collateral damage"-innocents who die in order to win a war to save other lives. During WWII, we dropped 2 atomic bombs, which killed about 200,000 Japanese-a horrible loss, indeed! However, it is estimated that by doing so, 1,000,000 lives were saved; those Americans and allies who would've died in house to house combat to end hostilities against a nation that honored suicidal warfare (i.e.: Kamikazes).

America must take a strong stand against crime, of which murder is the most heinous. Collateral damage is regrettable, to say the least, but still a necessary ingredient of crime control. And I

personally am willing to take the slight risk of one day being put to death, though innocent, in order to keep in place a God-conceived and time honored method of punishment!

Those against capital punishment claim it is "inhumane" to kill a human for any reason. What hypocrisy! Most of those who argue this would also argue for abortion rights, which is nothing less than murder itself! Can't they at least be consistent? Capital punishment is in the best interests of everyone: the criminal (who might have never considered his eternal soul until faced with his own impending death); closure for the victim's family who through execution have the ultimate justice provided them in honor of their loved one; and those people who will certainly be spared any future crime the murderer might have committed while in prison or if paroled or (God forbid!) escaped. It is entirely humane to execute murderers. Remember, God Himself says so!

The Apostle Paul believed in the death penalty. He claimed, "If I have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die." (Acts 25:11). It is obvious from Paul's word usage, "any thing worthy of death," that it was clearly understood in New Testament times the Old Testament usage of capital punishment was not abrogated by the cross. Until Christ sets up His kingdom in Jerusalem and rules with a rod of iron, we'll need to continue to use the death penalty to help stem the tide of the "spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."(Eph. 2:2).

Spanking, churches, the Word & the death penalty: all are God ordained deterrents to crime!